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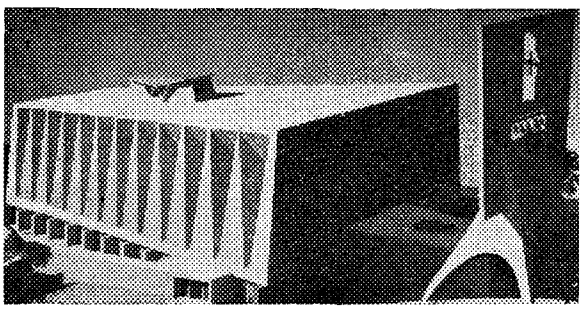

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-SEVENTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

CRISIS AT THE U.N.

THE SIXTEENTH ASSEMBLY of the United Nations will see that body fighting for its very life. The accumulated ills of the United Nations had already been intensified to the point of grave danger by the involvement of U.N. forces in bloody fighting against the troops of Moise Tshombe's Katangese government. And now the tragic death of Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold may furnish the final, lethal blow to the usefulness of what has been called "man's one best hope of peace."

Even before the air disaster which claimed the life of Mr. Hammarskjold, the stresses and strains which threatened the U.N. were formidable enough. There was, as usual, the question of China, except that this year it seemed impossible to keep that issue from coming to a vote and impossible to assume that the result would be favorable to the expressed policy of the United States. Not only would a China clash have profound effects on the character and capability of the United Nations itself, where a crippling division might have occurred between the West and the Afro-Asian nations, but the deep and emotional commitment of the American public at large to the exclusion of Communist China would have produced incalculably dangerous shock waves to whatever bipartisanship our foreign policy has known.

There were other serious problems, too. Not to be minimized is the presently near-desperate financial condition of the international organization. Added to the routine but large expenses of the U.N.'s day-to-day operations was the astronomic and continuing cost of the U.N.'s mission in the Congo, which became even more burdensome on the member-nations, especially the U.S., as France and the U.S.S.R. refused to pay their shares to support an activity they condemned.

Most important of the crises besetting the U.N., of course, was the recent decision to send U.N. troops against Katangese forces. From the outset, this step had been bitterly criticized by French and British spokesmen, and there was reason to believe that even among U.N. members who were withholding their complaints confidence in the Secretary General and indeed in the U.N. itself had been badly shaken. It was feared that the United Nations' intervention in the Congo—and above all its apparently unsuccessful intervention—might have proved to be the rock on which it would split.

NOW THAT calamity has befallen Mr. Hammarskjold, the likelihood of a successful resolution to what had been uniquely a Hammarskjold policy and a Hammarskjold decision in the Congo seems even smaller than before. The only hope that the U.N. could have extricated itself from the muddle of the Congo seemed to lie in the strength and diplomatic skill of the Secretary General—and in a certain measure of good luck. The luck has been bad, and Mr. Hammarskjold's abilities are lost to us. The prospect, then, is bleak.

The interests of the Soviet Union in the Congo—to drive out the Western "imperialists" and assist Russian-oriented Congolese in setting up an anti-Western state which would be dependent on the U.S.S.R.—were thwarted largely by Mr. Hammarskjold himself and secondly by the freedom of his office to undertake and implement U.N. rather than Soviet or Western policy. Thus the unceasing Soviet attacks on Mr. Hammarskjold and, when these were unsuccessful, on the organizational structure which allowed him to act contrary to the wishes of the Soviets. The "troika" concept, it will be remembered, was first put for-

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ward by the U.S.S.R. as a means of gaining a veto power over any and all U.N. activities.

Such a disastrous three-part committee structure to supplant the office of Secretary General is rejected by the West, naturally, but the feelings of some of the Afro-Asians are not so strong. India and the United Arab Republic, for instance, are known to look kindly on the idea, and some other of the neutral nations opposed it only because it meant unseating Mr. Hammarskjold and repudiating a Congo policy which they generally approved. With Mr. Hammarskjold now unseated by death, and with his Congo policy thrown into confusion and doubt, neutralist resistance to the troika is much less assured.

Never before has the U.N. seemed more vulnerable. The process of selecting a Secretary General is difficult at best. Under the present circumstances, with one great power committed to the idea of abolishing the very office, with others of the great powers troubled by the ability of U.N. staff members to "overstep" their authority as they charge was done in the Congo, with the Congo situation itself seething wildly, with all the other old and new pressures bearing relentlessly on the integrity of the organization—with all these handicaps, it seems almost impossible that the U.N. could come out of this Assembly without suffering, at the least, grievous wounds.

If there is any consolation to be found in the misfortunes which threaten the life of the U.N., and hence the hope in which it was founded and maintained, it is in the melancholy thought that there are disasters even worse than that which now overhangs the U.N. That is, nuclear holocaust would be worse for the world, and the opportunities for political victory which the Communists must now think they see may lead them to think less of a military solution. If such a development does nothing else, it may give the West some of the time it so desperately needs. In these dark days, we should be grateful, perhaps, even for comfort such as this.

THE RIGHT TO A JOB

IN RECENT YEARS a number of American communities with a high incidence of unemployment have had notable success in attracting "new" industries to their formerly prospering localities. The municipal authorities have played their part by making substantial tax concessions to any corporation that would come and operate a factory within the city limits. Local business leaders have organized and have raised substantial sums to proclaim far and wide the strategic virtues of their town as a site for profitable endeavor. This type of community action serves as one effective answer to the depressed areas problem except that it threatens to create new distress areas.

The reverse side of the coin is that many American businessmen are susceptible to the invitation to relocate. They are on the lookout for means of cutting costs—even when the means is as drastic as the shutting down of a plant and its reestablishment where taxes are lower, efficient workers more plentiful and less strongly organized, and wage levels appreciably lower. Often executives have made such a decision when the plant they were abandoning served as the backbone of a sizable local economy. All too frequently a company has left to fend for themselves workers who are too young for retirement on old age pensions but too old to learn another trade or secure another job. They find themselves left stranded by an enterprise to which they have dedicated their best productive years. Cases such as these raise the question to what extent a worker has any rights to his job.

In recent months several decisions, significant enough to be discussed by the London *Economist*, have borne upon such rights. In Philadelphia an arbitrator has held that a blouse manufacturer who had closed down his local plant and set up shop in South Carolina would have to retrace his steps or pay the union involved over three hundred and fifty thousand dollars. A maker of food products who four years ago closed his doors in Queens, N.Y., to set up operations in Bethlehem, Pa., had offered his workers jobs at his new plant. But he maintained that the move had terminated the old employment contract and that the workers who had moved with him had lost their seniority rights. A court of appeals has ruled that these rights, at least, were still in force. Finally, a judge in Detroit has ruled that a local company which planned to move South, to Tennessee, was obligated to offer jobs at the new plant to its Detroit workers on the basis of full seniority rights.

If these rulings and decisions are upheld despite appeals to the higher courts, the consequences could be considerable. It would discourage the tendency to shift plants to new localities primarily for the sake of lower labor costs and might retard the industrialization of the South. It could restrain corporations from arbitrary acts of this kind which often have such calamitous social consequences.

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Such recognition of the durable nature of seniority rights could come to mean that years of honest productive effort entitle the American worker to certain unassailable prerogatives.

WEST GERMANY'S ELECTIONS

THE LOSSES which Chancellor Adenauer and the Christian Democrats suffered in the long-awaited German elections will bring about a real change. As the C.D.U. will no longer enjoy a majority in the new Bundestag, a coalition will be required. The aged Chancellor immediately rejected a tripartite coalition which would include his main adversaries, the Social Democrats, who won 36.3 per cent of the popular vote and gained twenty-two seats in the Bundestag. That would leave only the possibility of governing in concert with the Free Democrats, who gained twenty-three seats in the elections and hold the power balance between the rival major parties.

Chancellor Adenauer, who has so long functioned as a pillar of strength and stability in the forces of the West, can hardly find a coalition with the Free Democrats of Erich Mende at all palatable. This minority group will demand the heaviest price for its collaboration. The Chancellor himself will even be expected to step down, perhaps immediately. For his successor the Free Democrats favor Ludwig Erhardt, the present Economics Minister, whom six years ago Dr. Adenauer refused to designate as his eventual successor.

All three parties are firm adherents of the West, and the Christian Democrats continue to constitute much the largest bloc in the West German parliament; foreign policy objectives are expected to remain substantially the same. But with a two-party coalition and a new Chancellor West Germany will be somewhat more inclined to seek these objectives by negotiating with the Soviet Union than heretofore.

MINISTERS IN JAIL

AFTER SOME FOUR months of steady arrests —the total is over three hundred—the jailing of Freedom Riders in Jackson, Mississippi, has become something of an institution in American life. The pattern of the arrests resembles that of a simple ritual: the Riders walk into a segregated eating place, the police tell them to move on, they refuse and are promptly charged with "disturbing the peace." Whether they choose to appeal the usual sentence of four months in jail or serve it, the outcome is almost inevitable.

It was not inevitable, however, that the fifteen Episcopal clergymen recently convicted and jailed in Jackson should have chosen to make the trip there. They could have pleaded the apparent futility of such a move, or the possible harm to the good name of their church. Or they might instead have issued lofty statements calling for moderate, very, very prudent steps which don't excite the passions.

The fifteen white and Negro ministers, including Governor Rockefeller's son-in-law, chose the more direct course. As part of a "prayer pilgrimage" through the South en route to a meeting of the Episcopal Society for Racial and Cultural Unity in Detroit, they chose, so the charge had it, to disturb the peace by attempting to eat a meal together. On the face of it the charge was preposterous, especially in the light of the oft-repeated claims of Jackson officials that they could easily control any racial disturbance which might arise in their city. And there was in fact no disturbance when the ministers arrived.

What Archibald Cox, the Solicitor General, has argued in a Supreme Court brief concerning a similar case could be said here as well. The Freedom Riders were arrested not because of the "likelihood of a disturbance, but for the sole reason that they were sitting in the wrong place."

The only peace that the arrests are likely to disturb is that of the Christian conscience. And the Catholic conscience, to be particular, ought to find something deeply troubling in the arrests. With only a few demurrals, the Freedom Riders have been praised by Catholics. Yet the absence of any priests from the ranks of the Riders, and the less than token presence of two or three laymen, is a fact that can no longer be missed. Our praise is beginning to have a hollow sound to it.

Beginning with the next issue, Richard Gilman will become The Commonweal's drama critic. Mr. Gilman has contributed poetry and criticism to a number of American journals, and readers of The Commonweal will remember him for his many articles and book reviews in this magazine. In welcoming Mr. Gilman the editors at the same time wish to express their deep appreciation to Richard Hayes upon the occasion of his departure. Mr. Hayes has served this magazine with distinction as drama critic since October of 1952, and we are grateful for the substantial contribution he has made to these pages.

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THE TWO CHICAGOS

THE FIRST MEETING of the National Catholic Conference for Interracial Justice was held in Chicago three years ago. I attended, reporting on the proceedings in these pages. This year the National Conference's convention was held in Detroit; I was sorry not to be able to attend, for the work of the Catholic Interracial Councils seems to me about as important as anything one can think of.

I was in Chicago again this year while the interracial conference was going on in Detroit, and I was struck once more by the changes that have taken place in recent years. I don't mean just the striking new skyscrapers along the lakefront, although they are impressive enough. But the real revolution has been in the racial and residential character of the city, and it seems to me the mood of the people reflects the change.

Chicago is the city where I was born, and I think I know it fairly well. This trip, I came away with one dominant impression. For the first time in my experience, I would say that Chicago today is a nervous city. And what Chicago is nervous about is the race question.

Just before World War II there were a little more than 250,000 Negroes in Chicago. Today that number has roughly tripled, running around 750,000. Part of the increase is due to migration from the South; the rest is due to a sharp upturn in the rate of natural increase. Negroes are still a minority in Chicago, but no inconsiderable one; it is estimated that in a very few years one out of every four Chicagoans will be a Negro.

While all this has been happening, the exodus to the suburbs has been going on, in Chicago as in every large city I know of. Most of those who left the city's problems behind during the last decade were white, and many of them, it has to be said, moved for one big reason: to get away from the race question, at least for the time being.

You don't have to be a sociologist to see what is going on in Chicago. Most of Chicago's Negroes used to live in a rigidly defined Black Ghetto on the South Side, with another but much smaller Negro community on the near West Side. Today, while it is not true that the Negroes "are taking over the city," as some white people put it, walls once thought impregnable have crumbled. And if the way Negroes are spread out over the city today would have seemed almost inconceivable ten years ago, it is clearly something that was bound to happen. The Negro district was always scandalously overcrowded; there is no way in the world 750,000 people could live in an area that was too small for one-third that number.

This is not to say, though, that housing in Chicago is really desegregated. In large part, what has happened is simply that Negroes have moved *en masse* into some areas of Chicago that were once thought of as white preserves. Inevitable as this change was, it has not been accomplished without incident, and in spite of the efforts of dedicated and far-sighted men, there is still very little neighborhood integration in Chicago.

In a few Chicago neighborhoods people of good will and good sense have tried and are still trying to exclude race as the prime factor in determining who will or will not make a good neighbor, but they seem to be in a definite minority. In most instances, the fears of the white community and the terrible pressure of population inside the Negro Ghetto have proved too much for such efforts. By and large, neighborhoods have not become integrated; they have either remained all-white, with constant wars and excursions on the borders, or they have gone all-black, with deep resentments and bitter discontents on both sides.

Given this situation, I suppose it is not surprising that Chicagoans are nervous. The poverty, overcrowding, disease and crime in some sections of the old Negro slums would rival anything found anywhere in the world. Many whites still associate these conditions, not with socio-economic-educational level, but with race. Small wonder, then, that they become panic-stricken at every rumor that "Negroes are moving in."

On the Negro side of the wall, you see another picture. In all Northern cities decent housing is in short supply for all but the very rich, white or Negro. For many Negroes the housing situation has been desperate for the last twenty years; they are not much inclined to worry about the "traditional" prerogatives of white Chicagoans. And the presence of young and not-so-young hoodlums of both races makes the smallest incident potentially dangerous.

I don't want to exaggerate the problem in Chicago; there is some reason to think the press has done just that in recent months. But the situation is delicate, as it is in several other Northern cities, and it seems to me that those who are trying to do something about it do not get as much support as they need and deserve.

There is no single over-all, sure-cure answer to the problems of racial tension in Chicago and our other Northern cities. What answers there are, though, I think will come out of the work of groups like the Catholic Interracial Councils. If more attention had been paid to them ten or twenty years ago, we would, of course, be in far better shape today and cities like Chicago would have less reason to be nervous, but it is still not too late. The thing is, will enough people listen, even now?

JAMES O'GARA.

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The Chinese Dilemma

Economic contradictions remain the major obstacle to the attainment of the Chinese Communists' objectives

by HAROLD C. HINTON

"Ill fares the land to hast'ning ills a prey[1]
Where wealth accumulates and men decay."
But how much more unfortunate are those
Where wealth declines and population grows!

[1]This line is execrable; and I note it.
I quote it as the faulty poet wrote it.
—Hilaire Belloc

WRITING in 1958, Mao Tse-tung described his people as poor and blank, in the sense of pure. The assertion was a convenient one at the time, for Mao's regime was assaulting the traditional religion of the Chinese people for the first time and herding them into communes in order to extract the ultimate in labor from them. Poor the Chinese certainly are, and likely to remain, but the implication of primitive innocence seems inappropriate to the heirs to one of the most sophisticated literary cultures and one of the most durable popular cultures in human history. Nor does it accurately reflect the Chinese Communist regime's attitude toward or relationship with the tradition of the country it rules.

Chinese civilization originated about 2000 B.C. in the valley of the Yellow River, a region where it was possible to have stimulating cultural and technological contacts both with Central Asia and with the non-Chinese rice-growing peoples of South China and Southeast Asia. The real basis of Chinese culture and the large population associated with it, then as now, was the practice of what has been called permanent agriculture—the extraction of sustained and fairly high yields of cereals from land whose fertility was carefully maintained by irrigation and above all by the return to the soil of large amounts of vegetable, animal and human wastes. As the population began to outgrow its original homeland, the Chinese proceeded to extend their agriculture and their domination over the warmer, moister lands to the south of the Yellow River, absorbing or displacing the original inhabitants as they moved.

By the nineteenth century of our era, approximately, this process had filled most of the available territory which the Chinese regarded as habitable and rightfully theirs, except for Manchuria, and was beginning to spill over into Southeast Asia, where only the Vietnamese could rival the Chinese in energy and pioneering qualities. Western colonialism in Southeast Asia stimulated the influx of Chinese but prevented it from tending toward political domination and helped to generate antibodies in the form of indigenous nationalism. Since the defeat of the Western colonial powers by Japan and Japan's subsequent collapse, Southeast Asia has ranked among the world's leading power vacuums, a standing temptation to Soviet, Chinese, and local Communist ambitions. The Chinese Communists consider Southeast Asia to be their sphere of influence but are restrained from pressing their claim too strongly by fear of military retaliation and a desire to preserve at least polite relations with the neutral governments and indigenous peoples of the area.

To return to permanent agriculture, it has in practice a serious innate weakness: like modern industrialism, but less rapidly, it tends to destroy the ecology of the environment within which it is carried on. This is mainly because the steady population growth to which it leads, combined with an ignorance of the principles of conservation, has produced extensive deforestation and erosion. Nature takes its revenge in the form of floods, dust storms, droughts, locust swarms, and the like. This situation is tolerable as long as new land is available, but since the nineteenth century Manchuria has been virtually the only remaining accessible non-marginal reserve of virgin land, and it is filling up rapidly. Today lands that if properly farmed could probably give about 400 million people a reasonable diet and

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a modest industrial establishment are being asked to feed nearly 700 million people and support a massive program of heavy industrialization.

BROADLY speaking, Communism grew and triumphed in China for three main reasons. The first was the Japanese invasion between 1937 and 1945, which disrupted Chinese life and society and gravely weakened the National Government, but gave the Communists an excellent opportunity to expand and increase their power. The second was the numerous errors of commission and omission attributable to the National Government. The third was the revolutionary strategy devised by Mao Tse-tung, who gained the leading position in his party at the beginning of 1935 and has kept it ever since. Mao's genius lay in adapting the essentials of Leninism to the Chinese scene in a way that his more doctrinaire colleagues and rivals were unable to do, and above all in adopting highly organized and politicized guerrilla warfare as his main avenue to power. His success in leading and strengthening his own party and its army and in making headway against both the National Government and the Japanese enabled him to maintain a posture of respectful autonomy in his relations with Stalin which was practically unique in the Communist world in those days.

Nevertheless, when Mao began to ponder, about 1939, the more difficult problems of the exercise, as distinct from the seizure, of power, in a China free of the complications of Western and Japanese influence and under Communist rule, but still face to face with its own inability to support its people, he could think of no better solution than the Stalinist formula: the Communist police state, forced industrialization, and a socialized agriculture to foot the bill. Even in the Soviet Union, with a much more favorable relationship of resources to population, this formula meant terrible suffering for a generation. In China, its imposition on a much more crowded land may yet produce a disaster more appalling still.

For Communist China is an entity with three main aspects: traditional, conventional, and Communist. It is the heir to the strengths and problems of the old Chinese empire and to a tradition of Chinese cultural and political hegemony in much of East Asia. It is also a territorial state using, but not restricting itself to, conventional diplomacy and power politics to achieve conventional national objectives—territorial unification, military and economic strength, diplomatic recognition, representation in international organizations, and so forth. Most obvious and probably most important, it is by definition a Communist state, the second ranking power in the Communist Bloc.

To this summary of the Communist aspect must be added the peculiar historical experience of the Chinese Communist movement, which embraces a less subservient relationship with the Soviet Union than has been maintained by any other major Communist Party, and a relationship with the United States that has led it to rate us as a "paper tiger."

Today, the Chinese Communists say that we, their main enemies, are aggressive but weak. Their actual view, much closer to the truth, is that we are strong but reluctant to use our power. They therefore think that we can be bluffed and provoked to considerable lengths without unleashing the nuclear attack which, contrary to the impression they sometimes try to convey, they surely do not want and which their regime probably could not survive. At the same time, they try to gain additional security by taking shelter under the edge of the Soviet nuclear umbrella and demanding Soviet support and protection in connection with their own unilateral adventures. This pushfulness naturally does nothing to improve their relations with either the United States or the Soviet Union.

THIS BRIEF survey of the essentials of the Chinese Communist outlook and system indicates that, while some elements of them are old in the sense of being derived from, or at least resembling, the traditional past, the most significant elements are new.

Among the features that seem in keeping with the Chinese tradition are: the manipulation of peasant revolt as the major means to power, the extraordinary efforts to make it appear that all governmental actions are motivated by sweet reasonableness and concern for the public welfare, natural disasters on a colossal scale, a policy toward minority peoples smacking heavily of what Communists call great nation chauvinism and repaid from time to time by revolts—most notably, in the case of China, in Tibet—and a towering conviction of cultural superiority to all other peoples.

But all this is outweighed, and increasingly so, by what is new. One new element is the size of the population, which obviously is bigger now than ever before and the problem of whose feeding makes all others seem almost insignificant. Another is the imposition on China's groaning agriculture of a Stalinist heavy industry program, in an effort to make China some day the first nation in the world in total, although of course not in per capita, output. Another is the ability to project China's military power, which will be tipped sooner or later with a modest nuclear capability, into a considerable number of Asian countries at any time that the game might seem worth the candle. Finally, instead of being as in the past the "Middle Kingdom," China is for the first time part of an international system, theoretically worldwide in its potential extent, of which it is not the center, or at any rate not yet.

As this last qualification implies, there is a principle that overarches and unifies the old and new elements

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in Chinese Communism. This is the concept of China's right to a unique and superior status among the countries of the world. This concept, firmly held in traditional China down to at least the middle of the nineteenth century but rendered difficult to maintain by the chaos and weakness of the ensuing hundred years, has reemerged since 1949 in Communist guise. Its reappearance heavily colors Peking's pursuit of its three main objectives, which may be described in shorthand fashion as a strong China, a united Communist Bloc, and a Communist world.

As for the first of these objectives, the Chinese Communists apparently seek for their regime the eventual status of a superpower, ranking with or better still ahead of the United States and the Soviet Union. This ambition requires the acquisition not only of the substance of such a status—economic and military strength—but also all its trappings, such as permanent membership in the United Nations Security Council, nuclear and thermonuclear weapons, intercontinental ballistic missiles, and earth satellites.

As for the second objective, the Chinese Communists evidently intend to proceed as far as they can, short of disrupting the Communist Bloc to the point of ineffectiveness, along a path whose theoretical milestones are autonomy and a second ranking position within the Bloc, but distinct inferiority to the Soviet Union (the situation prevailing substantially from 1949 to 1953); the emergence of China, and conceivably other Communist states as well, as a power center within the Bloc more or less equal to the Soviet Union, a condition known as polycentrism (the first steps along this stage of the path seem to have been taken by the Chinese Communists in 1953, immediately after the death of Stalin, and many more have been taken since then); and finally domination by China of the entire Bloc, or "socialist commonwealth" as it sometimes calls itself. The main fly in the ointment, of course, is the unquestionable objections of the Soviet party to being relegated, however gradually and skillfully, to anything less than first place. So far the Russians have been able to hold the line, to bend noticeably without breaking, but as Mao Tse-tung says, the Chinese are very patient.

As for their third objective, the Chinese Communists believe that their experience is the best, if not the only suitable, model for all the underdeveloped areas of the world. This astounding notion claims a more or less exclusive Chinese right to provide the blueprint, to exercise pre-eminent influence, and perhaps to control to the extent feasible Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Latin America, leaving the Soviet party free to do the same for North America and Europe. There is a great deal of evidence that the Russians reject the idea of a Chinese monopoly of the underdeveloped areas, principally the fact that they themselves operate energetically and successfully in all the major regions of the underdeveloped world, sometimes at obvious cross purposes with the Chinese. For reasons of geography, Chinese efforts at the promotion and expansion of Communism have been felt mainly in Asia, but they have been growing increasingly conspicuous in other areas as well since about 1958.

OUR DISCUSSION ends where it began, with China's economic difficulties. For these, probably even more than American hostility and opposition, are the main obstacle to the attainment of the Chinese Communists' three main objectives: a strong China, a united Communist Bloc, and a Communist world. How can a country fundamentally unable to feed its enormous population spare the sizable sums necessary for the achievement of even the trappings, let alone the reality, of superpower status? How can it compete with the Soviet Union, mighty as it is for all its internal and external problems, remold the Communist Bloc and the international Communist movement in an image more pleasing to Peking, and assert that it is making significant progress toward "communism" with its implications of abundance? How can it persuade the increasingly sophisticated elites of the underdeveloped countries that it, rather than the mature United States, the Soviet Union, or for that matter the dynamic economy of Yugoslavia, is their best model? The answer to all these questions would seem to be, it is impossible.

The problem is not so easily disposed of, however. For many years Mao Tse-tung has practiced the art of extracting results from resources apparently insufficient to produce them, and of confusing and evading his opponents while he gathered strength and waited for an opportunity. These are skills not to be despised even in the face of a demographic and economic problem of colossal dimensions. Since 1949 the Chinese Communists have raised to a high pitch a technique that may be called Chinamanship, or the art of behaving like a superpower without actually being one. It may be that if they cannot produce a real solution to their basic problem, they can at least produce an apparent solution calculated to convince the world that after all, all is for the best in the best of possible Chinas. This would have a propaganda advantage but no more. It would not alter the fact that China continues to have the worst of two worlds; in other words, it suffers both from the high population densities associated with monsoonal rice agriculture and from the disruptive effects which Communist collectivization and industrialization have had on the agricultures of all the countries of the Communist Bloc. The Chinese people, whether "poor and blank" or not, must take the blame for the first horn of this dilemma. But if China's last state turns out to be worse than the first, responsibility for the second horn must be assigned to their rulers.

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Harlem Si, Tammany No

by JACK NEWFIELD

I want there to be a sign on Tammany Hall that says Aqui se habla español. —Carlos Rios

FIFTEEN YEARS after the death of Fiorello La Guardia, and a decade after Vito Marcantonio's enigmatic empire crumbled into disillusionment, a new phenomenon has begun to stir the impoverished multitudes of East Harlem. It is a phenomenon that preaches tenants' councils, literacy tests in Spanish and a $1.50 city minimum wage. The cradle of this phenomenon is the East Harlem Reform Democratic Club, an anomaly among the city's reform clubs, since it is neither white nor middle class, and its only contact with eggheads is a charcoal drawing of Pablo Casals that hangs on the wall.

On September 7, the club's volunteer brigade of teen-age enthusiasts, student socialists and working-class Puerto Ricans rose up to smite the once invincible Tammany machine, and elected Carlos Rios the first Puerto Rican district leader in the city's history. The victim of this patchwork crusade was John Merli, the incumbent of fourteen years. The social forces that achieved the victory were those of Puerto Rican representation and a decade's accumulated hatred of slum landlords. The regular Democratic organization in East Harlem, either through venality or stupidity, counterposed itself to these forces.

Heart, brains and founder of the East Harlem reform club is thirty-three-year-old State Assemblyman Mark Lane, who launched the club in the winter of 1960, after spending five years in Spanish Harlem, where he waged war on landlords and police brutality, and took up the cause of minorities and civil liberties, generally in the same case. His club's first public act was to throw a picket line around S. H. Kress and Co. on the corner of 106th Street and Lexington Avenue, three days after the first sit-in in Greensboro. Lane believes it was the first sympathy picket in the north. His credentials as a civil rights militant gained further certification this June when he and Manhattan N.A.A.C.P. President Percy Sutton were arrested in the white waiting room of the Jackson, Mississippi Trailways Bus Terminal. His trial has been scheduled for November 7.

In March of 1960 Lane won the reform nomination from Manhattan's Tenth Assembly District, which extends from 74th Street to 106th Street, and from the East River to either Third, Park or Lexington Avenues, depending on how badly a specific block has been gerrymandered. All three reform clubs in the 10th A.D. voted Lane their endorsement, but only after he was subjected to grueling attacks on his past left-wing and Marcantonio associations by the membership of the club in the 10th A.D. Middle, and after the female co-leader of the club in the 10th A.D. South had resigned when Lane received an 82-3 vote of confidence.

Lane won the June 7 primary by 900 votes, and in November Kennedy's coattails helped elect him much less than the 3,100 Puerto Ricans the East Harlem club registered for the first time during one week in October.

Prior attempts to bring the thousands of unregistered Puerto Ricans of the community into politics had all ended in failure. In 1957 the Council of Spanish Organizations estimated that only 85,000 of the potential 266,000 eligible Puerto Rican voters in New York City were registered. Any attempt to pin this apathy to the Puerto Rican culture, however, was shattered by the eighty-three per cent turn-out in the island's 1960 Presidential elections.

THE causes of the small registration in East Harlem were numerous. Many Puerto Ricans sensed the insincerity of every candidate who tramped across the East Harlem landscape between Vito Marcantonio's death in August of 1954, and Lane's campaign of 1960. Then, too, the dominant Merli organization understandably made no effort to bring them into politics. But the major roadblock was the requirement that registrants pass the literacy test in English. Many Puerto Ricans were embarrassed to try; others were warned not to try.

The three major groups of unregistered voters consisted of elderly people who had lived their entire lives not voting; those who withdrew from politics in disgust after the three major parties formed an alliance to purge Marcantonio from Congress in 1950; and those who had moved into the neighborhood since 1955.

The number who withdrew after Marcantonio's defeat has never been calculated, but is probably a

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considerable figure. Running on the American Labor Party ticket in 1951, Manuel Medina, Marcantonio's protégé, polled 28,000 votes to Merli's 35,000 in a race for the City Council. When this is compared to the 5,500 votes polled by José Loman on the Liberal ticket in 1957, in a race against Merli, the depth of Marcantonio feeling in the Puerto Rican community becomes apparent.

But there are reasons why the registration drive of 1960 succeeded in East Harlem where others had failed. One was the youthful zeal of the campaign workers, who provided baby sitters, transportation and moral support in order to prod, convince and cajole more than 3,000 Puerto Ricans into registering for the first time. The same drive also enrolled 1,100 new voters who were not Puerto Rican.

The principal reason, though, was that Lane turned the registration drive into a frontal assault on the literacy test requirement, as he argued from every street corner in East Harlem: "The Spanish-speaking people who read *El Diario* or *La Prensa* are infinitely more informed on the issues than anyone who reads the *Daily Mirror*. . . . This test is blatantly discriminatory." And he cited a federal survey which charged New York State (along with Georgia and Mississippi) with discrimination in voting rights.

Lane was so anxious to test the legality of the literacy test that he broadcast the answers to it from a sound truck, daring arrest, and he maintains now that even more new voters would have been enrolled if it weren't for harassment by desperate Merli poll watchers on the last day of registration. Next October Lane vows to ask Attorney General Kennedy to send federal registrars into East Harlem.

That registration drive, coupled with Lane's victory, set the stage for Carlos Rios to challenge Merli's district leadership for the first time in a primary struggle. Rios came to East Harlem from Puerto Rico in 1949, and for twelve years his mournful eyes gazed upon the daily, unremembered tragedies that are the history of every slum. He saw rat-infested schools that made no provision for the hundreds of children who spoke only Spanish. And he became the secretary of a P.T.A. He saw sweatshops that flourished in the community. And he became an organizer for the Cap Makers Union. He saw the youth of the community clubbed by police and seduced by narcotics pushers. And he became a lay preacher with the East Harlem Protestant Parish. He saw Puerto Ricans cheated out of political representation. And he became a candidate for district leader.

THE tempo of the campaign modulated slowly, like a bolero, through the scorching summer. When the petitioning period began on June 21, more than half of the 10th A.D. North's sixteen election districts were bereft of captains. Rios, who was recovering from a mild heart attack, suffered while helping move the furniture of an evicted friend, was unable to campaign. Funds were low and campaign workers scarce.

But in early July the New York chapter of the Young People's Socialist League committed a dozen of its less sectarian members to work in the campaign. Several days later, the F.D.R.-Four Freedoms Club, a band of twenty-eight idealistic high school students, entered the campaign, and quickly became the backbone of the club, their members often staying to four and five in the morning to get out a mailing. And then individuals began walking into the club.

The intense magnetism the club holds for the youth of the city is the wellspring of the phenomenon of East Harlem. One of the reasons for the attraction is that the club offers a unique opportunity for day-to-day contact with men and women who carry the scars of exploitation and bigotry. To read in a textbook that East Harlem has twenty per cent chronic unemployment or the highest rate of narcotics addiction in the country is one thing. To walk through the hot, ugly streets and see these statistics etched in the faces that stare out from every open window is something else. A second reason is the public acceptance of Lane as a moralist and idealist. He has managed to identify himself with most of the coherent left-of-center movements on the college campus, including the civil rights movement and the drive to abolish the House Un-American Activities Committee. He has also gained the allegiance of the historically apolitical beats of Greenwich Village through his defense of the coffeehouse owners in their battle against alleged police shakedowns, and the Village artists, whose lofts are menaced by a new city ordinance.

On July 28th the campaign reached its first crest, when Mayor Wagner, wed to the reform movement three days before at a shotgun ceremony, reluctantly accepted Lane's plea that he tour the block of East 100th Street, between First and Second Avenues, a block of 4,200 people crammed into twenty-seven rotting tenements.

The Mayor of New York came to the city's cruellest slum in the middle of a hot afternoon. He saw rats, roaches and vermin. He saw junkies lounging in hallways. He saw mounds of decaying garbage in backyards. Lane took Wagner into an apartment at 311 East 100th Street where rats had eaten the stuffings out of the sofa. He took him into another apartment where the toilet bowl overflowed a foul smelling river each time it was flushed. He took him into a backyard where the stench from rotting garbage was intolerable and a swarm of mosquitoes buzzed around the mayor's head.

As Wagner walked back towards his shiny limousine, he was approached by a craggy-faced man carrying

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a cigar box. He told the mayor he was trying to collect enough money to pay for the funeral expenses of his eighteen-month-old son, who had toppled from a fifth floor window the day before. On July 30th the block was declared a Play Street, and a volleyball net was set up in the middle of the street, presumably to exterminate the rats and cure the junkies.

BY THE FIRST week of August the club had borrowed sound truck equipment from the A.D.A., and whenever they could borrow a car (mostly Lane's) the mobbed streets of East Harlem echoed the sound of Rios' speeches, delivered in hoarse, passionate Spanish, and the pungent lyrics of Gil Turner's folksongs. The repetitive themes of the street corner oratory were discrimination, housing conditions and Puerto Rican representation. "Ninety-sixth Street," Lane would shout a dozen times a night, "is the Mason-Dixon line of New York City. . . . Housing is more segregated here than it is in Jackson, Mississippi."

One night a policeman ordered the truck off the streets because it was 10:30. "Leave it alone," a ten-year-old told the cop on the beat, "they're for the tenants. Go chase Merli's truck, he's for the landlords."

The campaign moved into its last weeks, building relentlessly towards the crescendo of primary day. More tenants' councils were organized. More petitions for reductions in rent were filed. Money began to trickle in from the wealthier reform clubs as the scent of possible victory floated downtown. More mailings went out.

And so too did the tempo of the Merli campaign increase. His sound trucks nightly roared "The truth about slimy Mark Lane, that racist who went on a Freedom Ride only to spread more hate and bias . . . that pro-Communist who wants to destroy The House Un-American Activities Committee . . . that Jew whose real name is Levine." The references to Rios were less frequent. They said he was "only for the rich Puerto Ricans," and that he preached his sermons "dressed in a tuxedo." They put up posters depicting him as Lane's puppet.

On August 21, while Lane was attending a special session of the Legislature in Albany, four men charged into the Rios headquarters and threatened several campaign workers with a lead pipe. On August 29, while riding to a rally with Eleanor Roosevelt in an open car, Lane was struck with a beer can hurled from a rooftop. Four stitches were required to close the wound in his scalp. The incident, which received considerable coverage in the daily press, proved to be a potent weapon during the last days of the campaign.

The outpouring of voters on primary day dwarfed everything in the turbulent history of East Harlem politics. In some election districts the vote was as high as eighty per cent. The Rios poll watchers, not one of whom was over thirty years of age, successfully challenged hundreds of non-residents who tried to vote, while squads of "pullers" worked frantically to get out the favorable voters.

By 10 p.m. when the polls closed, a noisy clot of five hundred people was crammed into the tiny reform clubhouse. By 10:15 the first three election districts, with large Italian and Irish populations, had reported. They showed Rios and Merli running neck and neck. Next came the returns from two heavily Puerto Rican districts. Rios carried them handily. Then Roberto Verdejo, captain of the populous 50th election district, raced into the clubhouse waving his tally sheet. Rios had carried his district by a margin of 5 to 1.

At 10:28 Lane stood on a chair and shouted "We've won." The final results showed Rios carried twelve of sixteen election districts, winning 2,839 to 2,038.

Then followed a jubilant parade through the streets of East Harlem. Gil Turner, riding on a sound truck, led the marchers, and hundreds of others standing on fire escapes and street corners, in tuneless but wildly enthusiastic renditions of "East Harlem's My Home," and "Que Bonita Bandera." By the time the parade reached a delirious midnight climax, the ranks of marchers had swelled to almost 1,000.

On 100th Street a woman raced out of a tenement hallway and grabbed Lane in a violent embrace. "Today is our Independence Day," she screamed in Spanish.

But September 7th was really only the beginning. One district leader and one Assemblyman do not make a social revolution. Rios, a man who was shaped by years of living in the bowels of a slum, will probably accede to Lane's seat in the Assembly next year. Lane has said many times that his mission in East Harlem was to serve as a friend until the day of Puerto Rican representation came. He believes that day has come with Carlos Rios.

And what of Lane's future? He is, I think, at thirty-three, destined to help fill a great void in American political life. Someday, if the Senate of the United States is very lucky, Mark Lane may be its gadfly.

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Prophet Without Hope

by RICHARD HORCHLER

A SECURE PLACE in the literary histories was won by John Dos Passos more than a generation ago. It is fortunate that this is so; yet how sad that the best to be said of the many books he has written since then is that they will not strip him of the eminence he earned so long ago. All the books he has produced since the thirties show the workings of a real and formidable talent; none has been simply bad; but all of them together inexorably chart a slow downward curve to his career.

His most recent novel, *Midcentury* (Houghton Mifflin. $5.95.), is the biggest, most ambitious book he has given us in some years, but it amounts to no more than still another disappointment. (How long can we say that an author's work is consistently "disappointing"?) It is true that one reviewer, H. T. Moore, in the N.Y. *Times Sunday Book Review,* found the new book "one of the few genuinely good American novels of recent years." But the consensus was overwhelmingly and harshly critical, not only to the extent of condemnation but even to lamentation, which is crueller. That the Chicago *Tribune's* reviewer found the book valuable is understandable in that he emphasized political considerations; Professor Moore's judgment, not labeled as political, must remain inexplicable.

Everyone, even the publisher, has pointed out the similarities between *Midcentury* and Dos Passos' monumental trilogy *U.S.A.* Both are "collective," and their most obvious similarity is in style and construction, in the attempt to communicate the myriad faces and levels of American experience through dizzying shifts in point of view, tone and narrative sequence. Where the volumes of *U.S.A.* tried to catch the rhythms and flavor of American life in the device of the "Newsreel," jumbled strips of newspaper headlines, advertising slogans, scraps of popular songs and current sayings, *Midcentury* has periodic sections of "Documentary," fragments of headlines, news stories and hard- and soft-sell advertising. *U.S.A.* interrupted its narratives from time to time with "biographies," ironic poetic hymns to actual American heroes of the times, and so does *Midcentury. U.S.A.* had its "novels," interpolated life-stories of many different but representative characters, whose experiences took them here and there all across the country, their paths sometimes coming together, sometimes only approaching; *Midcentury* uses an identical scheme.

The one technical device of *U.S.A.* which is not used in *Midcentury* is that of the "Camera Eye." The "Camera Eye" consisted of occasional withdrawals from the turmoil and stridency of the other levels into low-toned, subjective reveries, delicately poised stream-of-consciousness perceptions of the author himself as he lived through these times. This kind of private writing and private thought is not to be found in the new novel, which is entirely a public document. Perhaps the person who wrote the "Camera Eye" no longer exists.

Comparison between *U.S.A.* and *Midcentury* is no kindness to the latter, however. For one thing, the innovations in technique which made *U.S.A.* a revolutionary work even in point of style have not been new for almost three decades. More importantly, the once-sure hand of the master is now fumbling and uncertain even in the execution of the most familiar tricks. The "biographies" in this last work are tame and predictable; the "Documentary" sections are mechanical and tiresome; the "novels" are, with few exceptions, hackneyed stories of weak and uninteresting people.

BUT THESE are details; the great weaknesses of *Midcentury* are its littleness and lack of any sustaining spirit. *U.S.A.* was a passionate indictment of an entire society, the delineation of that society as a machine-inspired scramble for money and power in which the individual was either corrupted or overwhelmed, where the noblest principles of our heritage were not so much abandoned as prostituted to the service of the great bitch-goddess. In the last volume of the trilogy, *The Big Money,* Dos Passos cries out in his own voice, "all right we are two nations." The two nations are the rich and the poor, of course, but the rich have bought the politicians, newspaper editors, college presidents, business men, judges, lawyers, police, the armed forces. They "have turned our language inside out . . . have taken the clean words our fathers spoke and made them slimy and foul." In *The Big Money,* the decay of the democratic process is seemingly complete, and the concepts on which it was built are only a mockery: "there is no more place in

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America . . . for the old gags," which include such notions as "justice" and "democracy" itself.

Now this was radicalism, and whatever one may have thought of the perceptions and responses of the angry man who wrote these words, it was impossible in the thirties not to be affected by the spirit which inflamed them. Next to this furious assault on the society at large, *Midcentury's* denunciations seem puny and trivial. While it proclaims itself to be, like *U.S.A.*, a "chronicle" of America, this time at midcentury, it turns out to be almost entirely a "chronicle" of the labor movement, especially its corruptions. Even as the first volume of a possible larger work in the making, *Midcentury* presents a small, thin slice of life. The objects of attack in it—labor unions, chiefly, although liberals, do-gooders and bleeding-hearts are also swiped at—are too limited and too conventional for the indictment to be very impressive, but whatever their objects, the attacks themselves are just not exciting. There was rage in *U.S.A.*, and anguish, and finally deep despair. *Midcentury* seems animated by nothing stronger than bafflement and spite.

This is not to say that the new novel is without interest, or that it does not contain evidence of Dos Passos' genuine and high craftsmanship. But the occasional flashes of the old power are quickly dampened by grievous lapses in taste, or insight, or stylistic restraint. The "novels" frequently turn into the most transparent sort of propaganda; the "biographies" become over-lengthy sermons or, worse, degenerate into vulgar jeering and vituperation. A long and sneering attack on psychoanalysis and Freud, for instance, (originally published, appropriately, in the *National Review)* is almost unbelievably crude and sophomoric. Altogether, *Midcentury* is a fatigued and fatiguing performance, although it is one of the best books its author has published in a good many years.

WHAT HAPPENED to Dos Passos? What changed the passionate defender of the rebel and the underdog into the querulous guardian of the status quo? What transformed the fiery radical of the thirties into today's gray eminence of right-wing Republicanism?

The disappointing answers to these questions, at least in the sense in which they are usually understood, is that nothing happened to Dos Passos, beyond of course the growing old of the heart. The truth is that the shifting political attitudes of Dos Passos, from the early radicalism to the present uneasy conservatism, spring from the same fundamental outlook on life; that the barrenness and hopelessness of Dos Passos' work today are but the fulfillment of dispositions discernible in his writing from the beginning.

Dos Passos' all but forgotten first book, in 1924, was *One Man's Initiation,* a loosely connected series of highly subjective, somewhat precious sketches of his experiences as an ambulance-driver in the war. It might seem that the aesthetic musings of *One Man's Initiation* could have little relation to the later tough-mouthed tracts in behalf of social justice. Actually, the attitudes of the dilettante-hero of this semi-autobiographical first book can be traced through all the works that followed.

For example, the young ambulance-driver comes to feel that men are basically good, despite the evil and misery in which they find themselves. He is not sure why, but he fears that dignity and serenity are being lost in modern civilization. He feels humanitarian impulses but is discouraged by a sense of individual helplessness. Mostly, he is wearied by the ugliness and suffering he sees and would like to be able to retreat forever to a beautiful, changeless abbey, which symbolizes for him a finer way of life.

Three Soldiers (1921) was a second, much stronger representation of the war. On the surface a very different sort of book from *One Man's Initiation,* it has form and a thesis, and its rough, slangy language and shocking realism convey a powerful picture of the degradation of the individual by regimented life. It is specifically concerned with social ills—war, regimentation, bureaucracy—but its point of view, like that of *One Man's Initiation,* is essentially that of an outsider. There is no sense of social participation, no feeling of responsibility. Society is the enemy.

More explicitly Rousseauistic than the first book, *Three Soldiers* presents individuals as yet uncorrupted by life, then traces the very process of corruption by evil—in this case, military—institutions. Dos Passos' spokesman in the novel, John Andrews, is an older, less arty version of the ambulance-driver. He was the first in a long line-to-be of doomed heroes, and he makes clear that his dissatisfaction with society is not a consequence merely of the machine age: "It seems to me that human society has been always that, and perhaps will always be that: organizations growing and stifling individuals, and individuals revolting hopelessly against them, and at last forming new societies to crush the old societies and becoming slaves again in their turn. . . ." Yet there is a hint of the particular tyranny of industrial civilization in Andrews' emotional response to the uncomplicated, pre-machine way of life on certain French farms. In *Three Soldiers,* however, there is no possibility of an "abbey" of refuge.

So the world was seen in every successive novel. *Manhattan Transfer,* in 1925, showed impressive technical advance and a significant shift in the scope of Dos Passos' outlook. The first of the "collective" novels, its protagonist was the city itself, and the teeming life of the megalopolis was represented by means of the montage technique which reached its fruition in *U.S.A.* The larger canvas, the innovations in technique, the

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change in the author's vantage point were aspects of *Manhattan Transfer* which revealed development of a sort; yet the vision of life—with man as victim—remained the same. If anything, the enlargement of the unit of concern to the city only reinforced the hopelessness revealed in the earlier books; men looked even more puny and transient in the toils of the societal monster they had created.

This, of course, is the perennial inadequacy of the naturalistic technique which was to weaken most of Dos Passos' further work. The extent of Dos Passos' actual acceptance of philosophic determinism—then or now—is difficult to judge, and certainly he has not held that principle with consistency; nevertheless, *Manhattan Transfer,* like most of the novels after it, portrays a deterministic world, and thereby loses a good part of its point. That is, Dos Passos, champion of individualism, seems always to be illustrating, apparently despite himself, the real fact of individual ıpotence and helplessness.

MANHATTAN TRANSFER was the first example of the enlarged social consciousness and extended sympathy which marked Dos Passos' work from this point on. The workers of whom Dos Passos wrote in the thirties (and the ones he observed in life) had the unions as their only champion, usually, and as their only hope of ameliorated conditions. Despite the hopelessness of Dos Passos' novelistic representations of American society, he at least seemed to have some faith in the power of organized labor to adjust abuses. At any rate, the sympathy and encouragement which ıe offered in these years to the union movement and :o the workers in their strikes and other efforts to win mproved labor conditions, both in and out of his ɔooks, contributed to his growing reputation as a radi-:al, a Socialist, possibly a Communist.

The Communists, of course, were not at all averse o claiming Dos Passos as a comrade, although to do o it was necessary for them to misrepresent, or at ɛast persistently misunderstand, the works they were ıailing. Actually, if *Three Soldiers* be considered Dos 'assos' first social novel, we see in each succeeding vork a clearer rejection of our whole industrial civil-zation, an increasing belief in the futility of substituting one collectivity for another, reiterated warn-ıgs of the dangers to individual integrity in a centrally ontrolled society. The fact that Dos Passos' opposition ɔ capitalism was no greater than his suspicion of all rganized societies was made embarrassingly clear to ıe Communist critics through the volumes of *U.S.A.,* nd was applied very specifically to Communism in *dventures of a Young Man* in 1939, and with increas-ıg frequency and vehemence thereafter.

The pattern of Dos Passos' works, however, and ıe assumptions underlying it, had never really changed, and were not to. Its passion, imagination and inventions in technique give *U.S.A.* an extraordinary vividness and power of conviction, but the thesis of the trilogy is essentially the same simple view of *Three Soldiers,* published in 1921, and even of the new, "right-wing" *Midcentury,* published exactly forty years later. *U.S.A.,* for all its fervor and stylistic brilliance, depicts a closed system of despair. Its little people are helpless before the forces which direct their lives, and if human beings are helpless as individuals, there is no hope for them in organizations either. For then they become part of a movement, are led and, to Dos Passos, necessarily victimized. To him, a leader is a leader by reason of his being dedicated to a cause rather than to the people who are its end; the movement becomes more important to the leader than the people for whose sake it was originally begun. Communism supplies the classic, but by no means the sole, example.

In 1939, *Adventures of a Young Man,* written in conventional narrative, followed the career of another of Dos Passos' doomed young men. Its hero, Glenn Spotswood, is a man of good will who drifts into the Communist Party, becomes disillusioned, is expelled from the Party as a "deviationist" and eventually murdered by Party leaders. *Number One,* in 1943, dealt with Tyler Spotswood, older brother of the martyred ex-Communist. He becomes involved in native-American political intrigue, serving as personal assistant to a Southern demagogue patterned on Huey Long. When his chief's nefarious political and business schemes go awry, he discovers he will be the scapegoat, is shattered by the experience and turns to drink for escape. *The Grand Design* (1949) is the final volume of the Spotswood trilogy. Its theme is the corruption of the New Deal, and its men of good will are two idealistic young men who come to Washington under the shining banner of the Roosevelt Administration. Both are gradually disgusted by the cynicism and selfishness of life in the capital. At the end, one is driven from his post and goes home heartbroken and defeated; the other quits too, he to join the Navy and "lay back and take orders."

Chosen Country (1952) seemed to reveal a "new" Dos Passos, in that it has a happy ending. Its hero is thwarted and wearied by the evil and corruption he encounters everywhere, but he finds love. He and his bride flee from big-city corruption and go back to their roots in clean, sunny New England, where they live in quiet joy and rectitude. Interesting though this is, the happy ending is quite unconvincing. The lovers escape destruction or martyrdom simply because they abandon any role in their society; they cling to one another like the lovers of "Dover Beach," looking fearfully upon a world with "neither joy, nor love, nor light,/ Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain."

In any case, whatever expectations may have been

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roused by *Chosen Country* were soon dashed. *Most Likely To Succeed* (1954) was a tedious, squalid recital of a Hollywood writer's sell-out to Communism. *The Great Days* (1958) was a whining monologue by a once rich and successful journalist, now old, defeated and unable to get work; one reason for his failure is the liberal conspiracy, which will not forgive his intransigent anti-Communism. This year's *Midcentury,* already mentioned, describes a nation rotting from within. It is no less depressing, leaves the same bad taste in the mouth.

THERE IS, then, no reason to believe that Dos Passos has changed his outlook in any fundamental way. It is true that his political sympathies have moved steadily from far left to far right, but it seems clear that this movement has resulted not from changes in ideological conviction—Dos Passos has never held to any ideology—but from shifts in the nation's political power structure. From the beginning he has believed that power corrupts absolutely, that the out's are by definition more virtuous than the in's.

Many of his later books have gone over the same ground he covered in his "radical" days, telling the same stories but from a "right-wing" view, changing the villains to heroes and the other way round. Perhaps this is a kind of expiation for past gullibility; perhaps it is revenge on those who deceived him; more likely, it is an attempt in the light of later knowledge to "set the record straight," for Dos Passos has always thought of his work not as fiction but as "contemprary history."

As for the undeniable decline in his powers as a writer, apart from any question of a change in his view of man and his fate, there are several plausible if not finally convincing explanations. There is first of all the sheer toll of the years. There is the legendary pattern of the writer who burns himself out after one or two brilliant books, a pattern so much a part of our experience as to give rise to the merely hyperbolic saying that there are no old American writers. It is tempting, perhaps, to believe that Dos Passos' deliberate repudiation of "art" in favor of his social documents has resulted in a drying up of his creative faculties, but a moment's thought on our culture's great socially purposive "artists" reveals the simplicity of such a notion.

More to the point, I think, is the fact that Dos Passos could not really believe in the social value of his writings, and thus could not really believe in any value for them. Dos Passos has a deeply felt belief in the value of human existence, and this is simple faith, the opposite to doubt. Yet his mind is steeped in materialism and determinism, and reality, as he conceives it, yields no clue to that which gives life dignity and value. In a lifetime of writing, he has made it heartrendingly clear that he can believe, finally, in nothing —not God or man or art or truth, not science or progress or democracy, not even his beloved America.

Curiously, Dos Passos has published many apparent affirmations in his non-fiction works, which I have not mentioned here. These are usually either straight reportage, often incorporated almost as is into the novels, or historical studies of American heroes like the Founding Fathers. As history, these latter are competent, and if they had been written by anyone else would have been briefly commended and forgotten. From Dos Passos, however, they are significant.

What is extraordinary about these studies is that they often make history, or historical figures, "come alive" through vivid writing, but almost never is ever the slightest connection made between the days of old when there were giants in the earth and our own depraved and gloomy era. Almost never are the noble concepts which undergird our democracy (the "old gags") subjected to any analysis or discussion, although they are reverently invoked and the men who fought for them held up for praise and honor. Whatever affirmations can be drawn from these books remain nebulous and remote. Furthermore, a look at Dos Passos' publishing history shows that these excursions back into the years of faith are always followed by novelistic statements of contemporary hopelessness.

DOS PASSOS is *le misanthrope,* the soured idealist. The discrepancy between the real and the ideal is not to him a challenge to be faced or a mystery to be celebrated; it is a frustration, a bafflement, to which he responds with annoyance and anger. It was never ideas which gave his writings their power, but the depths of his emotions and the imaginative energies they enkindled. Surely it should not surprise us if half a century of failure and frustration has wearied Dos Passos, left his mind in desperation and disorder.

John Dos Passos has, nevertheless, his place in our literary history. It is an irony that, having abjured art he should be thought of perhaps primarily as a stylist that having spent himself in a fight against the "collectivization" of modern life, he should be most famous as the perfecter of the "collective" novel.

Today Dos Passos is frequently honored, but by the wrong people, and for the wrong reasons—by such the Young Americans for Freedom, and with such Taylor Caldwell. We need not deny his later aberration and hysteria, or the cruel dulling of his talents; he deserves to be honored for what he has attempted the heroically committed books he has written, for the role he has played in shaping the social conscience of his country, for the lifetime he has spent in a search for intelligibility in a hostile, meaningless universe, the only one he knows. For these reasons, and most all, I think, for the integrity of his lifelong defeat, too would honor him.

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An Exchange of Views

"Catholics in Latin America"

Rome, Italy

TO THE EDITORS: The article by Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn, "Catholics in Latin America" (June 23), reveals a rather superficial knowledge of the general and religious problems in Latin America. To mention only a few examples:

1. Lack of vocations is due much more to the absence of a middle class than to poverty and celibacy.
2. It is not true that "concubinage in the Andean region is a *regular* phenomenon." That is a calumny and the author should retract it or bring forth proof before the proper authorities.
3. The younger Spanish priests now in Latin America are among the finest of the finest in the world.
4. The Church cannot "oppose the rich" any more than it can oppose the poor. The author should become acquainted with the leadership and example of such Bishops as Larrain of Talca, Chile, and Helder Camera of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. I know personally dozens of priests and Bishops in Latin America whom I consider as the leading exponents of social justice in the world.

In conclusion may I suggest that the author seems to lack historical perspective. Let him realize that the whole world is not on Eastern Daylight time.

(*Rt. Rev. Msgr.*) L. G. LIGUTTI.

REPLY

Lans, Tyrol, Austria

TO THE EDITORS: I am terribly sorry about the discomfort I caused to Monsignor Ligutti with my article on Latin-America, all the more so as I have great admiration for his work. My article in question was only a micro-replica of a thirty-six-page article I published in July's *Erdkreis,* obviously less superficial (but still highly compressed) as compared with the short account in The Commonweal.

Still, I would like to make a few remarks to the points raised by Monsignor Ligutti:

1) To number one: There is in world-wide relations no proof that the larger the middle class, the bigger the number of vocations. Why should Latin America be so different? (And then: I mentioned poverty as one handicap. Certainly the middle class is nowhere the poorest class. Let us then jointly agree that misery does not exactly favor vocations.)

The Latin Rite priesthood at the present time presupposes a minimum of two vocations: One, for the priestly tasks, two, for the single life. Only the coincidence of these two vocations can "result" in a Latin Rite Catholic priest. Just talk with a large number of seminary rectors and see to what extent the mortality rate *anywhere* is due to the regrettable lack of a proper existence of both vocations in the same person.

2) As to concubinage in the Andean region, let me put it this way: the overwhelming majority of bishops in the overwhelming majority of cases will not suspend a priest living in concubinage. I do not consider my earlier statement a calumny. Humanly speaking I would consider it a miracle were it otherwise. *Gratia supponit naturam!*

3) The younger Spanish priests now in Latin America are among the finest of the finest in the world. I quite agree.

Both Point 3 and 4) When I write about local views or sentiments with words like "generally considered" or "equally strong feeling," I do not imply in the least that I share such views, feelings or sentiments. I must reluctantly agree that Msgr. Ligutti has here a point because so many authors writing in English—if they do not want to go out on a limb—prefer to quote a "local" view. I never do that. I rather think that I made it quite clear that preaching about Social Justice in the Mixed Zone (which is constantly done) has a psychological and perhaps also good political effects; that, if such exhortations are followed, the "provocation" of wealth would be lessened. Yet the most radical social reforms would not improve living standards if the whole ethos of work is not fundamentally changed.

I am sure that a careful re-reading of my essay would convince Monsignor Ligutti that we agree in about half of the points under discussion. As to his very last remark I would be most gratified if he were to read once more my last paragraph, and the sentence just preceding it. Keeping in mind Monsignor Ligutti's actual place of residence, I would say that on this particular problem we probably agree one hundred per cent. And it is Central European Time which is at fault (where I am also living) not Eastern Daylight Time, which is ecclesiastically quite innocent of the Latin American state of affairs.

ERIK VON KUEHNELT-LEDDIHN.

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Meet the Press

by NAT HENTOFF

IN A COMMENDABLY acerbic article, "The Decline of Book Reviewing," for *Harper's*—later reprinted in "Writing in America" (Rutgers)—Elizabeth Hardwick detailed with exasperated accuracy the boneless, characterless vapidity of the New York *Times Book Review,* the *Herald Tribune's* book section, the *Saturday Review,* and other national founts of topical literary criticism.

"The flat praise and the faint dissension, the minimal style and the light little article," she wrote, "the absence of involvement, character, eccentricity—the lack, at last, of the literary tone itself—have made the New York *Times* into a provincial literary journal, longer and thicker, but not much different in the end from all those small-town Sunday 'Book Pages'."

I wonder, however, if Miss Hardwick had recently seen a cross-section of the word from the provinces when she made her comparison. The book section of the Sunday *Times* may be predictably frustrating, but just as it takes a week in Los Angeles or Chicago to yearn desperately for the New York *Times* as a whole, so an introduction to transcontinental literary criticism is a startling revelation of how much flatter taste-making can be than even in the microcosm of J. Donald Adams.

I have just had this dun experience as a result of the publication of a book this past June. In August, the publisher sent me a clutch of clippings from around the country. I had no complaint at the consensus of the verdict, but I had to be dismayed at the ways in which it was delivered. First of all, there is the ubiquity of the wire service review. The predominance of Associated Press and United Press International as a primary source of news outside the largest cities is often underestimated when the lack of an "informed" American public is deplored. It is small wonder that the majority of our citizenry is indeed ready to explode us all for the sake of West Berlin when one realizes that most of their skimming knowledge of the conundrum there is based on unedited wire service reports. With few exceptions, the wire service reporter, as Arnold Beichman of the *Christian Science Monitor* observed in *Encounter,* is "half-educated, limp before the magnitude of events and purveying facts he barely understands, let alone the truth about the facts."

Mr. Hentoff, a regular contributor, writes on literary, musical and general cultural affairs for a number of American journals.

The same, with similarly few exceptions, can be said of the wire service reporters on the theater, television, and books. The faceless aridity of the national press, then, is due only partly to the fact that out of 1,461 cities, 1,400 have single ownership of all the papers in town. Another contributing factor is that most of these company editors swallow the press services whole, editing only for space.

IN MY CASE, the Associated Press reviewer wrote a competent assessment (or rather, description) of my book, but it was dispiriting to see the same words in so many different places. At least nineteen papers ran the A.P. review (rather than spend five or ten dollars to get a qualified local perspective.) Furthermore, only three identified the author as an A.P. staffer. The rest blithely printed the summary without by-line or with just the man's name as if he were a member of the paper's extensive roster of critics.

In a number of other instances, a resident critic was indeed commissioned to review the book. A few were provocatively perceptive, but there were several who gave no indication of having read any of it beyond the dust jacket and the introduction. A man in Charleston, for example, was resourceful enough to include two paragraphs from my introduction without change—except that he forgot to surround them with quotation marks. In a couple of places, the reviewer also commented approvingly on an album announced on the dust jacket as being released simultaneously with the book. Alas, the album is still in production.

After reading so much grayness (including the identical review so often), I joyfully welcomed the vinegary dissent of the man from the *National Review.* At least he'd read the book even if he lamented the passing of the o'd, happy Negro to whom "jazz used to be music" rather than sociology. Similarly, it was refreshing to meet an individual in the Newport News *Daily Press,* despite his need to inexplicably condemn my beard as well as my book: "Nat Hentoff, who wears a Castro beard and a mantle of disdain for anything in the Southland, has written another book on jazz music and Crow Jim-ism social beliefs."

In any case, it seems to me after this initiation into the book reviewing practices of the *moyen* American newspaper that a true subversive could have a relatively easy time of spreading his message in a book if only the

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lust jacket copy were glowingly positive and ignored nything inflammable inside. And if he were lucky nough to have his book assigned to a lazy member of A.P. or U.P.I. the revolutionary would have it made, t least so far as the provinces were concerned. The only precaution he'd have to take if he were bearded would be to ask his publisher to send along a publicity shot of someone else, possibly William Buckley. Undoubtedly it would be printed in many places as the veritable likeness of the author.

BOOKS

Sociologist's View of the Clerical Profession

RELIGION AS AN OCCUPATION: A Study in the Sociology of Professions. By Joseph H. Fichter, S. J. University of Notre Dame Press. $6.50.

By RONALD GROSS

FATHER FICHTER has tackled the problem recognized by St. Thomas when he wrote that the holiest person in the community need not be chosen as the superior if there is some less holy person who is a competent administrator. Around this thematic tension Father Fichter has organized the vast —though in some areas still inadequate—amount of sociological data concerning the "ecclesiastical occupation."

The tension arises because the clerical profession has a dual purpose. Its objectives include both the personal sanctification of its members and the performance of certain apostolic services for its lay "clientele." Inevitably, tensions arise as these two purposes impede or contradict each other, and the resulting conflicts are reflected both in the minds of individual functionaries and in the strained sinews of the organization itself.

Looking at the sacerdotal vocation the way a trained sociologist would study any segment of our complex modern world of work, Father Fichter considers the background and selection of candidates, their professional training and education, and finally the roles they perform and the problems they face during their careers. But he goes even further by devoting considerable attention to the structural and organizational forms of the religious life, and how they measure up to the criteria of productive efficiency that have been developed in recent studies of other large-scale organizations in the fields of education, social service, business and industry.

In the training of recruits we find the first signs of the dual-purpose dilemma. The Church is in the uniquely advantageous position of being the sole "employer" and training agency for its own religious personnel. On the other hand, it has the difficult job of preparing people for both the religious life and for a particular occupational role. Perhaps the most dramatic way in which the two goals may conflict is in the novitiate's removal from the secular world for his training period. This withdrawal from one's future "clients" makes impossible the kind of apprentice or internship experience which is so important a part of the education for secular professional workers in such fields as nursing or teaching. Many have criticized this form of training as not even adequately preparing prospective priests for general diocesan service.

Looked at more broadly, the entire other-worldly orientation inculcated by religious training runs counter to a number of the presuppositions which, Father Fichter points out, must underlie a life of professional service in the modern world. He notes the "striking analogy" between the profit motive of the businessman and the monastic ideal of personal sanctification, contrasting both with the "service-oriented" attitude of the professional worker in the secular world and the religious who is deeply engaged in his apostolic mission. Father Fichter is forthright in drawing the moral of this contrast: "A training program that sets out deliberately to keep a person in a perpetual state of childlike dependence cannot possibly develop a professional who exhibits initiative and responsibility."

The antithesis between the traditional religious demands of the Church vocation and the functional demands of a modern profession runs through the entire work world of the Catholic Church, from the question of training recruits for sanctity or for competence, to the concern in the mind of the practicing priest over the proper distribution of his time between meditation and functioning as an executive. This central conflict may be considered the current embodiment of the perennial controversy over the relative importance of faith and works.

Not only is it a personal problem for the individual religious, it is also a structural problem for the organized Church as a social institution trying to do specific jobs in the world. Father Fichter sees the conflict here as between two contrasting ways of organizing for work: the bureaucratic and the professional. This distinction is technical, not invidious. Bureaucracy is the technique used by any large-scale organization to maintain its own corporate sanity by dividing work up in such a way that it can be done semi-automatically through specialized administrative and operating personnel. Such a system achieves coordination by using set procedures, centralized authority, and corporate responsibility. It is this pattern of organization, rather than any one individual, which gets the work done.

The professional way of organizing work contrasts sharply with this pattern. The individual is responsible for doing the whole job, and

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is supplied with the expert competence and the feeling of initiative and responsibility to carry the job through.

The problem of reconciling these two methods cannot be solved, it can only be resolved through a recognition of the demands of any highly skilled modern job. Such an occupational role has its own set of demands—in a real sense it selects people who can meet its prerequisites, rather than vice versa, and having chosen them it puts heavy demands on what they must do to fulfill its requirements. Once the religious functionary has stepped into the professional role of his "subsidiary" occupation, his actions and decisions must be shaped by the demands of that role. The rigorous strictures concerning obedience, indispensable perhaps as religious training, simply will not permit successful professional functioning. "People who are performing modern professional services cannot produce efficiently," concludes Father Fichter, echoing his warning about training methods, "if they are handled like school children or unskilled workers."

The resolution of the conflict was indicated by Pope Pius XII: "The Church insistently demands of you that your external works correspond to your interior life and that these two maintain a consistent balance." Such a "consistent balance" requires that the Church organization be preserved through its traditional procedures which have preserved it for centuries. But self-preservation through collective, bureaucratic safeguards does not exhaust its purpose, which includes the accomplishments of its apostolic mission.

Father Fichter's book points the way to a synthesis of the bureaucratic and professional principles which, by better balancing the Church's traditions of loyalty and initiative (as expressed in the founding of new orders), would enable it to become what it should be: a model of how personal commitment, institutional solidarity, and occupational creativity can be reconciled in the complex contemporary world of work. This reconciliation can only be accomplished by recognizing, as Father Fichter does, that work has two inextricable components: it fulfills a primary need of *homo faber,* but it also requires an end outside itself and a social institution to reach that end, in order to become meaningful as well as necessary.

Letter to a Dead Mother

A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH. By Virgilia Peterson. Atheneum. $5.

By JEAN HOLZHAUER

IS IT temperament or the times which breeds writers of autobiography? What prompts the faith that makes "setting it all down" seem worthwhile, despite the public and private dangers and in the face of the indifference of most readers, especially in an age such as ours, geared to collective thinking and to the empty universal rather than to the rich particular?

Such questions are gratuitous and perhaps academic, since every era breeds its own autobiographers, motivated to display or apologia by mysterious pressures. Yet we have reason to be grateful for nearly all of them. Few torches light up so brilliantly our own paths as the sudden, unsolicited and unabashed confidences of a friend, even when the confidences are published ones and the friend not yet known in the flesh.

Miss Peterson's book informs us as much by its direction as by its content. It is a 334-page letter to her dead mother, a woman who, under her layers of intellectuality, her moral conventions and devotions to causes, comes through as something of a devil in her indifference and hostility to her daughter. Running through Miss Peterson's account of her own girlhood, her three marriages and her professional career as literary critic

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ıd book-assessor is the constant, ıournful, gentle reproach: "Had ɔu been otherwise, I should have ɜen otherwise," a remark addressed, incidentally, not only to ɜr mother but to the circumstances hich cast her successively in conicting roles.

Yet she does not shirk personal ɜsponsibility. She calls herself an ıjustice collector and *A Matter of ife and Death* bristles with *mea ulpas*. As a matter of fact, one ɔnders what the effect of a little umor might have been on the ook.

Not that Miss Peterson, esɜntially a proud, sensitive and ɜrious woman, is without her ɔnies and her jokes. But what is ıcking in her account is that tough nd serviceable comic sense that ıight have provided for her a betɜr balance-wheel than the religion which she tried to grasp and failed to hold.

In that case, of course, there might have been no book, which would have been a pity. For not only are her insights of value but the facts of her life have an intrinsic interest. From the terrifying yet rather funny mother who was convinced that her time and energies were wholly her own and insisted to her dying day that Virgilia "must be insane,"—her father was, ironically enough, a successful New York psychiatrist—to the Polish count with whom she had a protracted romance and a perishing marriage, and from her doomed attempt to achieve a unity of spirit with Poland, to her career days as a literary critic in the brutal New York "market place" and her present marriage, it is all absorbing and full of substance.

The Process of Poetic Criticism

'OETRY AND CRITICISM: Four Revoutions In Literary Taste. By Stanley ɜdgar Hyman. Atheneum. $4.

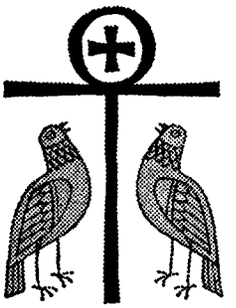
By JOSEPHINE JACOBSEN

"IF WE ARE to seek to understand art and literary criticism," begins Mr. Hyman, "not in solation, but in relation to the ɔoetry that is its subject matter and ɔerhaps its justification, we would do well to discard the idea that great critics call great poets into being. The true revelation seems rather to be the reverse; revolutions in criticism follow after revolutions in poetry. . . ."

Mr. Hyman has lucidly organized his argument about four points in the process of literary history which evaluates and then reevaluates: "A is the original poem, which we will call the *standard*. B is the criticism that erects the A poem's formal organization into general principles, the *poetics*. C is the new or deviant work that cannot be accommodated to the critical principles of B, and we will call it the challenge. D is the new critical generalization that arises out of, and justifies, C, and it might be called the *sanction*." Extracted by quotation, this may sound arbitrary but it is the framework on which is stretched the examination of the particular poems which Mr. Hyman has wisely allowed to serve as total examples.

One thread relevant to the whole fabric of criticism is the repeated demonstration of how critics of true eminence can flatly contradict each other. Mr. Hyman quotes Aristotle: "It has no one of the requisites of tragedy: it does not appeal either to the human feeling in us, or to our pity, or to our fears . . ." ; and Longinus: "For some passions are found which are far removed from sublimity, or are of a low order, such as pity, grief and fear . . ." ; as well as aberrations of judgment such as the contemporary characterization of Pope's poetry as "spoonfuls of boiling oil, ladled out by a fiendish monkey at an upstairs window," and "Othello" as "a Bloody Farce, without salt or savour."

It is fascinating to see by means of Mr. Hyman's shrewd selectivity the modulation and rerighting processes by which the broad balance of criticism is maintained, and how inevitable are major readjustments



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in the judgment contemporary to a work of art. It is these processes which keep the criticism of any given work sufficiently fluid for the problem always to be viable. Mr. Hyman's comparison of Shakespeare and Dryden ("Anthony and Cleopatra" being the operative work) draws fresh ideas from this trampled ground.

The most exciting of the essays are the two which examine Pope and Eliot, in the framework of Mr. Hyman's process. He travels to Eliot's poetry somewhat heavily equipped with Freudian luggage, but in the main he produces from it stimulating and logical conclusions. Eliot, currently under the strongest attack to date, in this chapter shows at his best as critic.

One Eliot quotation remains a touchstone for what is perhaps the major change characteristic of contemporary poetry: "If you compare several representative passages of the greatest poetry, you see . . . how completely any semi-ethical criterion of 'sublimity' misses the mark. For it is not the 'greatness,' the intensity, of the emotions, the components, but the intensity of the artistic process, the pressure, so to speak, under which the fusion takes place, that counts." "Here finally," adds Mr. Hyman, "is what will allow the 'low seriousness' of 'Sweeney Among The Nightingales' to be great poetry, the intensity of the fusion."

At a time when there is a tide of strong revulsion running against the inflated dicta of many of the more entrenched critics of poetry, Mr. Hyman's book is a model of combined modesty and authority, and of good sense; it may serve to reinforce our belief in the formidable value of criticism, provided that that criticism is approached with a rational irreverence.

REVIEWERS

Ronald Gross is a member of the staff of the Fund for the Advancement of Education.

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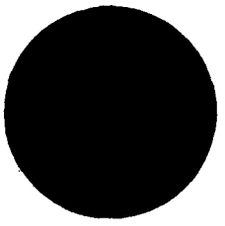
Josephine Jacobsen, a frequent contributor, writes short stories and poetry as well as criticism.



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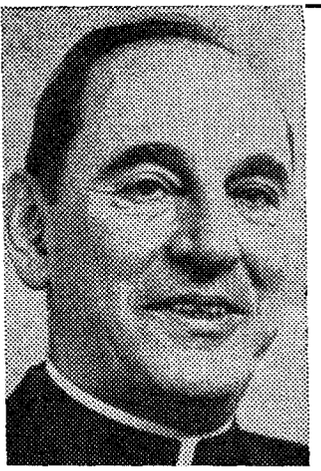
A Catholic view of the ecumenical movement



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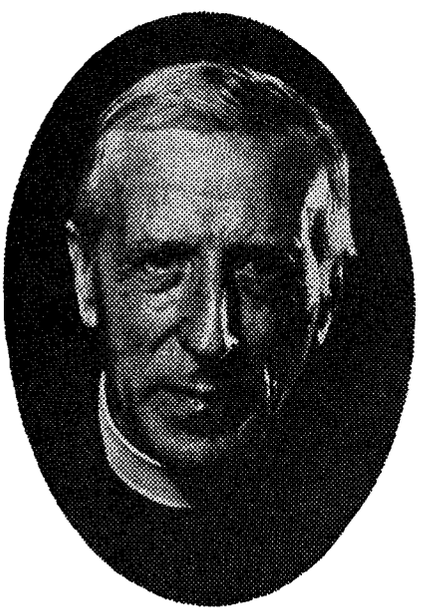

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